

CENTURY 21 M&M AND ASSOCIATES +SHORETEL

Century 21 M&M and Associates deploys ShoreTel, converts more leads to sales, and boosts the bottom line



Challenges:

Century 21 M&M and Associates had a hosted VoIP solution that was unstable and underperforming. In addition, the agency needed to establish a call center to process leads more efficiently and improve its lead-to-sale conversion ratio.

ShoreTel Solution:

ShoreTel provided the real estate organization the Enterprise Contact Center application, ShoreTel Voice Switches, and ShoreTel IP phones.

ShoreTel Benefits:

- Enhanced call center agent productivity
- Significantly improved customer service
- Improved lead-to-sale conversion ratio
- Cost savings due to in-house management

Disappointing performance

Century 21 M&M and Associates had a hosted Voice over IP (VoIP) telephone solution that was not offering the stability and performance the organization needed.

Manageability and scalability to enable more in-house control

Faced with poor stability and performance, the organization needed a new telephony solution. In addition, it wanted to expand its IT platform and manage the system in-house because it had no control over changes or issues on the network. Any problems or performance issues that had to be addressed and solved often took a long time and fell short of Century 21 M&M and Associates expectations.

The company decided to look for a phone system that it would bring in-house, one that was scalable to accommodate future growth, and most important, one that would allow the organization to implement a call center that would give it more information about where its leads were coming from, help it process those leads more efficiently, and improve its lead-to-sale conversion ratio.

“Real estate is a mobile business, so we wanted a phone system and a call center that would provide features to meet our specific requirements and allow us to better manage that business,” says Kevin Kaplan, senior vice president of Century 21 M&M and Associates.

Century 21 M&M and Associates contacted vendors and eventually came down to two IP telephony leaders: Nortel and ShoreTel. Century 21 M&M and Associates also seriously considered staying with its hosted solution from Covad Communications, but in the end, it came down to solution flexibility, functionality, cost-effectiveness, scalability, and ease of management. That's why Century 21 M&M and Associates chose ShoreTel.

"The ShoreTel solutions offered more functionality at a lower price—it's just a more cost-effective solution," says Kaplan. "We really like ShoreTel's Contact Center functionality, and ShoreTel gives us more flexibility for the future to manage the business more effectively."

Century 21 M&M and Associates invest in ShoreTel

With the ShoreTel Contact Center in place, Century 21 M&M and Associates call center processes approximately 4,000 to 5,000 calls per week, or 500-800 calls per day, with a large percentage of these calls being new leads, so it's imperative that these calls be answered quickly and by an agent with adequate skill and information. With Contact Center in place, call center agents receive calls and are able to quickly look up the listing agent and direct the call to whichever number the listing agent prefers. If the listing agent is not at that number, the call is automatically transferred to the agent's cell phone.

"We've actually been able to better manage our business with ShoreTel and minimize how many people we need to answer the phone at any given time because we can leverage people across locations," says Kaplan. "We save money by better utilizing our existing staff because of the ShoreTel implementation."

"The ShoreTel phone system and the Contact Center application have enabled Century 21 M&M and Associates to reinvent the process by which a real estate company does business," explains Kaplan. "Normally, real estate offices are not centralized but rather callers reach a branch office and may not receive a controlled, high level of service.

Finally, ShoreTel's powerful Find Me feature allows agents to configure the system so that callers reach them—for instance, on their cell phone or home phone. It is important that real estate agents always remain accessible to their clients, and the Find Me feature is especially useful for real estate agents with a lot of active listings who are out showing properties often. ShoreTel helps them remain in touch.

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Century 21 M&M and Associates

Employee productivity benefits bottom line

With the ShoreTel system in place, all Century 21 M&M and Associates agents and employees are on a centralized phone and voicemail system, using four-digit dialing to reach agents or employees at any location. The ShoreTel system also gives each agent and employee a graphical interface on their computer, ShoreTel Communicator, which provides Microsoft Outlook integration with employee computers for directory dialing, contact screen pops, and calendar integration.

With ShoreTel's email integration, agents and employees centrally manage their email and voicemail activity. The ability of the ShoreTel system to track customer phone calls, export and distribute voicemail files, and keep a running history of calls into each number is helpful in continually monitoring and improving customer service.

ShoreTel Success Story

The ShoreTel system also makes it possible for Century 21 M&M and Associates management to stay in touch with all of its 700+ agents and employees. "The executive team really likes the ability to broadcast voicemail messages to all of the agents and employees—it seems to be more effective than sending out a bulk email message," says Kaplan.

ShoreTel changes the way Century 21 M&M and Associates does business

We're the only real estate company in this marketplace to have implemented this central call-handling business model," concludes Kaplan. "We can only do that because of the ShoreTel system. This allows customers to get to the right agent quickly and improves lead conversion to sales. This is a huge benefit when recruiting new agents, making sure agents receive calls on their own listings, and keeping talented people. We get so many positive comments from our agents. The telephone system is crucial to our business and ShoreTel has given us the flexibility to think out of the box. It's been great that we've been able to implement a new business process model and gain so many benefits so quickly."

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ShoreTel. Brilliantly simple business communications.

ShoreTel, Inc. (NASDAQ: SHOR) is a leading provider of brilliantly simple IP phone systems and unified communications solutions powering today's always-on workforce. Its flexible communications solutions for on-premises, cloud and hybrid environments eliminate complexity, reduce costs and improve productivity.

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